

## MASQUERADE AT A GLANCE

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**Ruler:** The Silent Queen

**Government:** Autocracy

**Population:** 112 (90 humans, 8 halflings, 6 gnomes, 8 others)

**Notable Folks:** Her Grace the Silent Queen a.k.a. the Slumbering Captain Absinthe Morell (location 10), The Jester, Queen of Masquerade, Lymphania Jade (location 4)

**Alignments:** CN, N, NE

**Languages:** Common

**Resources & Industry:** Entertainment

Masquerade is a floating village—or perhaps more appropriately a floating theatre—populated mostly by people suffering from leprosy, who bear their affliction secretly behind colourful masks and costumes. These poor suffering souls were drawn in years gone by to the sanctuary offered by the visionary leadership of the Silent Queen, but frequent attacks drove them ever further from civilisation. In time, when the colony was swollen by afflicted actors and artists, the Silent Queen took them on a pilgrimage by river. To pay their way the colony put on shows, their poor corrupted bodies hidden behind festival masks, the smiles of audiences replacing the looks of horror the afflicted usually garner. Since then the troupe has sailed great rivers and coastlines, bringing joy, but sometimes—when their secret is discovered—bringing fear and forcing the troupe to hastily move on or face destruction.

In truth, the Silent Queen began her sanctuary to provide herself with ample food, her own leprous form having driven her away from her family and aristocratic friends. She became a beacon to those similarly afflicted. In time, though, she grew to pity and then love the suffering folk she brought into her “care”. After one particularly bestial attack when, bloated with hunger, she slew her lover and friend Barrus Marram she swore an oath never to consume human blood again.

That was over a century ago, but her fast has come at great personal cost—now little more than a tissue of skin atop fragile bones she perpetually lurks in her shrouded bedchamber, whispering instructions through the public leader of the colony Lymphania Jade, her only one allowed in her presence. The villagers, fear and trust the Silent Queen in equal measure; she is a night-terror, a beacon and bogymen. Although only the captain knows her secret, her hermit-like behaviour has birthed a thousand tales and stories.

When they can afford to, the troupe pays for one (or more) of their number to receive a *lesser restoration*. The Silent Queen

announces the next lucky recipient and great festivity ensues. Sadly, this approach has led to jealousy and, on two occasions, mysterious disappearances. There are also times where salvation becomes an obsession, with groups or individuals seeking to accelerate their fundraising to pay for cures. If cures fail, retribution is often sought.

Masquerade’s three boats become one when the show docks, the vessels joined together by ropes and boardwalks. The show—often known as the “Night Theatre”—only opens once the sun has gone down. Shadows and darkness are good to hide things in, after all.

### VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Masquerade, its history and surrounds. A PC making a DC 10 Intelligence check knows one or more pieces of information from the list below. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10:** Masquerade is a floating village which plies its curious trade up and down broad rivers and sheltered coasts. The curiously attired locals put on plays and comedies.

**DC 20:** Masquerade’s actors have great talent and their plays are not to be missed; the floating village is like some strange fairyland and only ever stays for a few days before moving on.

**DC 30:** Occasionally the village ups and leaves in an awful hurry for no clear reason.

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Masquerade, a PC may hear one or more rumours. A PC making a DC 10 Charisma check learns one rumour from the table below. A PC exceeding this check learns an additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10.

D6	RUMOUR
1-2	Bramble Hammlin, playwright and actor, was born into a noble family but was cast out by jealous relatives. He now wanders with the Masquerade in exile. He’s a difficult person, prone to tantrums.
3-4	Masquerade’s captain, the Jester, is a fierce lady known for her poisonous lashing tongue.
5-6	The locals make furtive references to “her below” and are in either awe or fear to whoever <i>her below</i> is.

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Masquerade's three boats have several locations of interest to adventuring types.

1. **The Singing Crooked Bridge:** Visitors enter Masquerade by the swaying rope bridge.
2. **Great Theatre & Pit:** Garish temporary home of the main events on Masquerade, spiritual home of Bramble Hammlin.
3. **Museum & Warehouse:** Part shop, part exhibition, locals supplement their income with tat, fakes and the occasional genuine treasure here.
4. **Leaning Fore-tower & Comedia:** Tumbling clowns and acrobats play this stage for comedic value supported by peculiarly talented animals.
5. **The Port Morality Play Barge:** Lesser side-stage where newcomers ply their arts in simple morality plays.
6. **The Grinning Gargoyle Door:** The only entrance below-decks, this locked door keeps curious visitors away from the most afflicted villagers.
7. **Upper Hold & Quarters:** Village meeting place, eating and drinking commune and home to the general populace, this confusing maze of tiny homes lurks immediately below the main deck of Masquerade's largest vessel.
8. **Infirmary & Lower Hold:** Here those with more advanced leprosy are given succour by a trio of devoted nuns, themselves bearing an advanced form of the affliction.
9. **Fore Captain's Chambers:** The public captain's chamber, which leads directly to that of the Silent Queen. The elected leader of Masquerade—known as the Jester—spends what little spare time she has here.
10. **The True Captain's Penance:** Daylight never enters the true leader's cot—it would destroy her if it did. The Jester is her only visitor.
11. **Trade Barge:** Here trade goods are held—the captain has always had an eye for a bargain and trade opportunity.
12. **Storage Hold Barge:** The main hold is used to store Masquerade's sets and props between shows.

